

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1810
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8225

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS CONVERAGE OF MAY 23 HOUSE INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON TARAPUR

REF: STATE 130536

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: THE DELHI PRESS MAY 25
GAVE EXTENSIVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO THE MAY 23 HOUSE
IRC HEARINGS ON THE RESOLUTION SUPPORTED BY 57 CONGRESS-
MEN TO BLOCK THE 7.6 TON SHIPMENT OF FUEL TO TARAPUR.
STATEMENTS BY DR. NYE AND VARIOUS CONGRESSMEN, AS WELL
AS NYE'S BRIEFING OF THE INDIAN PRESS CORPS, WERE
PROMINENTLY FEATURED. AMBASSADOR GOHEEN'S LETTER TO
SEVERAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON THE SUBJECT ALSO RECEIVED
EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY. SOME OF THE REPORTING BY THE
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS WAS INTERSPERSED WITH
EDITORIALIZED AND CRITICAL COMMENT. THUS FAR, THERE
HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL REACTION IN THE DELHI PAPERS.
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END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2. HEADLINES RANGED FROM FACTUAL TO UNFRIENDLY. SOME
PAPERS EMPHASIZED NYE'S TESTIMONY: CONGRESS (I)'S
"NATIONAL HERALD" HEADLINED ITS ACCOUNT (THE PTI DIS-
PATCH) WITH "STRONG PLEA FOR EXPORT OF N-FUEL TO
TARAPUR." THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" HEADLINED "US COMMITTEE

TO SUPPLY URANIUM, HOUSE PANEL TOLD". OTHER PAPERS EMPHASIZED THE COMMENTS OF CRITICAL CONGRESSMEN: THE "STATESMAN" HEADLINE WAS "US CONGRESSMEN'S PLEA TO STOP TARAPUR SUPPLIES". THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" HEADLINE READ "US SHRPLY DIVIDED OVER URANIUM SUPPLY, GOVT NUCLEAR EXPERT BACKS INDIA." THE "TIMES OF INDIA" WAS PREDICTABLY HARSH: "NEW US BID TO MAKE INDIA ACCEPT TERMS FOR N-FUEL".

3. THE LEAD PARAGRAPHS OF ALMOST ALL THE PRESS ACCOUNTS EMPHASIZE NYE'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE URGING THAT THE TARAPUR SHIPMENT BE RELEASED. PTI CALLED IT A "STRONG PLEA", ADDING THAT NYE HAD SAID THAT "WITHHOLDING THE EXPORT TO INDIA WOULD BE SERIOUSLY PREJUDICIAL TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF US NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES." THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" REPORTED NYE TELLING THE IRC THAT "FAILURE TO SUPPLY THE SHIPMENT...WOULD UNDERMINE 'THE DIALOGUE WE NOW HAVE WITH INDIA' ON NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION." MAJOR POINTS OF NYE'S TESTIMONY HIGHLIGHTED IN THE PRESS ACCOUNTS WERE THE US OBLIGATION TO SUPPLY FUEL DURING THE 18-24 MONTH GRACE PERIOD AND HIS REFERENCE TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S ASSURANCES THAT INDIA WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS NOR USE US MATERIAL FOR ANY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE PURPOSES. SEVERAL PAPERS QUOTED NYE AS SAYING: "WE HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT INDIA WILL ABIDE BY THESE COMMITMENTS." ACCORDING TO THE "STATESMAN'S" WARREN UNNA, NYE TOLD THE COMMITTEE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE (A STATEMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE U.S. INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE) OF ANY INDIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR EXPLOSIVES PROGRAM.Z

4. THERE IS ONLY BRIEF COVERAGE OF NYE'S BRIEFING OF THE INDIAN PRESSMEN. THE PTI DISPATCH SPECIFICALLY REFERS TO THE BRIEFING ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF NYE'S HAVING TOLD NEWSMEM THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS ALREADY IN COMMUNICATION WITH KEY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ON RELEASING THE BLOCKED SHIPMENT TO TARAPUR. ACCORDING TO THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" AND "INDIAN EXPRESS", NYE EXPLAINED AT THE BRIEFING THAT THE FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WERE NOT "PUNITIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY" AGAINST INDIA SINCE THEY APPLY EQUALLY TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THE "STATESMAN" REPORTS THAT NYE ALSO TOLD INDIAN NEWSMEN THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION FULLY INTENDS TO APPROVE TARAPUR REFUELING REQUESTS UNTIL THE 1980 CUT-OFF PERIOD SET BY THE NEW LAW. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER ACCOUNT, NYE ALSO TOLD THE PRESSMEN THAT THE US SHARED PM DESAI'S CONCERNS ABOUT PROLIFERATION. THE ACCOUNTS NOTES: "IT WAS MR. DESAI'S STAND AGAINST PROLIFERATION THAT HAD STRENGTHENED

THE US ADMINISTRATION IN ITS CURRENT STANCE VIS A VIS CONGRESS. MR. DESAI AND PRESIDENT CARTER SHARED A DEEP COMMITMENT TO RID THE WORLD OF THE NUCLEAR SCOURGE, MR. NYE SAID, AND IT WOULD BE A GREAT LOSS TO INDIA, THE US AND THE REST OF THE WORLD IF IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS ABOUT TARAPUR PREVENTED A WIDER UNDERSTANDING."

5. THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" CARRIED THE MOST EXTENSIVE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE OF NYE'S PRESS BRIEFING AND INCLUDED S Q AND A'S. "EXPRESS" CORRESPONDENT PARASURAM QUOTED NYE AS SAYING: "FROM THE LEGAL POINT OF VIEW (IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH INDIA IN 18 MONTHS TO TWO YEARS) THE CUT-OFF IS NOT AUTOMATIC. ON THE OTHER HAND THE POLICY QUESTION WHETHER IT WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE WISE OR UNWISE TO USE THE WAIVER IS A SEPARATE QUESTION FROM THE LEGAL QUESTION...THE PRESIDENT HAS IN THE PAST SAID THAT HE IS UNLIKELY TO USE WAIVERS. IT IS A QUESTION OF HOW THE PRESIDENT WOULD DECIDE TO USE THE LEGAL AUTHORITY BECAUSE IT IS NOT ONLY HIS OWN DECISION; IT IS ALSO WORKING WITH CONGRESS WHICH HAS THE RIGHT AND ABILITY TO OVERRIDE HIM." THE "EXPRESS" DISPATCH WAS THE ONLY ONE WE HAVE SEEN HERE WHICH SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS THE WAIVER ISSUE. DRAWING UPON THIS NYE BRIEFING AND TESTIMONY BEFORE THE IRC, PARASURAM WROTE THE FOLLOWING LEAD PARAGRAPHS IN HIS DISPATCH: "MR. JOSEPH NYE...TOLD A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE YESTERDAY FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT CUT-OFF OF ENRICHED URANIUM FOR TARAPUR IS BY NO MEANS AUTOMATIC UNDER THE RECENTLY ENACTED AMERICAN LAW EVEN IF INDIA DOES NOT AGREE TO FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS AS A RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS TO TWO YEARS. THE PRESIDENT, MR NYE SAID, WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A DETERMINATION IN THE LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES THEN PREVAILING...THIS WAS BECAUSE FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, WHILE BEING 'OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE', WERE NOT THE NLY OBJECTIVE. THERE WERE OTHER SECONDARY OBJECTIVES". PARASURAM CITED THESE AS THE US DESIRE TO WORK WITH INDIA ON VARIOUS NON-PROLIFERATION MEASURES AND TO MAINTAIN INDIA AS A RESPONSIBLE SUPPLIER OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. PARASURAM ALSO WROTE: "HE (NYE) WARNED THE HOTHEADS WHO WANT IMMEDIATE CUT-OFF THAT IF THE US CONTINUED TO CO-OPERATE, THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE THAT INDIA WOULD ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. THE PROSPECTS WERE CERTAINLY NOT 90 PERCENT FOR INSTANCE. HOWEVER, IF THE FUEL WAS CUT OFF, THE PROSPECT OF SECURITY INDIAN COOPERATION WOULD BE ZERO."

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ACTION NEA-11

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NSAE-00 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-15
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1811

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6. ALL THE DELHI PRESS ACCOUNTS GIVE PROMINENT
COVERAGE OF THE REMARKS OF REPS. OTTINGER, LONG AND
DODD (ALL NOTED AS MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S PARTY)
WHICH CRITICIZED INDIA'S STANCE. REPS. LONG AND DODD,
FOR INSTANCE, ARE EXTENSIVELY QUOTED FOR THEIR VIEWS
THAT INDIA'S THREAT TO REPROCESS FUEL IF A DISENGAGE-
MENT OCCURS AMOUNTS TO "NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL" OF THE US.
THE PRESS ACCOUNTS CITE THE CONGRESSMEN'S OBJECTIONS
TO THE TARAPUR SHIPMENT AS BEING BASED ON THE FACTS
OF INDIA'S 1974 NUCLEAR TEST, ITS REFUSAL TO SIGN THE
NPT AND ITS REFUSAL TO PLACE ALL OF ITS FACILITIES
UNDER INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. SEVERAL PAPERS, IN-
CLUDING THE "STATESMAN" AND THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES,"
GIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF REP. LONG'S THREAT TO BLOCK
U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIA OVER THE TARAPUR ISSUE.
REP. LONG IS ALSO QUOTED IN THE "STATESMAN" AS SAYING
THAT AMBASSADORS FROM INDIA'S NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES
HAD EXPRESSED THEIR APPREHENSION TO HIM OF INDIA
DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT,
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LONG LATER TOLD A REPORTER THAT THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR
REPORTED THAT REP. OTTINGER SOUGHT TO LINK TARAPUR WITH

THE INDIAN BAN ON THE EXPORT OF RHESUS MONKEYS. HE IS QUOTED AS SAYING: "INDIA, OF COURSE, USED OUR HEAVY WATER IN MAKING THE NUCLEAR DEVICE TESTED FOUR YEARS AGO...WE SHOULD NOW TREAT THE ENRICHED URANIUM IN THE SAME FASHION AS MR. DESAI TREATED THE EXPORT OF MONKEYS." SEVERAL ACCOUNTS PROMINENTLY MENTION THE CONGRESSMEN'S CONCERNS THAT PM DESAI IS 83 YEARS OLD AND "INDIA'S RECENT PAST LEAVES ROOM FOR POSSIBLE TURMOIL IN FUTURE". ALSO FEATURED WAS THE REMARK BY ONE CRITIC THAT IF MRS. GANDHI RETURNS TO POWER, DESAI'S ASSURANCES WOULD HAVE NO MEANING. WARREN UNNA IN THE "STATEMEN" REFERRED TO REP. LONG'S REMARK THAT "INDIA IS RUN FOR THE BENEFIT OF 20 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY ANYWAY" AND THAT "THE MORE THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CHANGES, THE MORE IT STAYS THE SAME."

7. THERE WAS ONLY BRIEF COVERAGE OF REMARKS BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN FAVOR OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S STAND. ONLY THE "INDIA EXPRESS" AND THE "STATEMAN" MENTIONED THAT REPS. WOLFF, DERWINSKI AND BINGHAM HAD INDICATED THAT NO STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN AT THIS STAGE TO UPSET "THE DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS" BETWEEN INDIA AND THE U.S. REP. DERWINSKI WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IS A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT, A PEACEFUL GOVERNMENT."

8. AS IS THEIR WONT, SEVERAL INDIAN CORRESPONDENTS EDITORIALIZED IN THEIR DISPATCHES. THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" CORRESPONDENT, FOR EXAMPLE, NOTED: IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE THREE CONGREEEMEN'S TESTIMONY...THAT THERE ARE STILL MANY MEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER IN THIS COUNTRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHO HAVE NOT "'FORGIVEN' INDIA FOR ITS TEMERITY IN EXPLODING A NUCLEAR DEVICE IN 1974. UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR FLAMMING RHETORIC WAS NOT MATCHED BY THE ACCURACY OF THEIR SPIRITED CONTENTIONS." HE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE WAS "AN AVOIDABLE TOUCH OF ARROGANCE IN THE TESTIMONY" BY SEVERAL CRITICAL CONGRESSMEN. THE "TIMES OF INDIA'S M.VM KAMATH WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY UNFRIENDLY IN DRAWING HIS CONCLUSIONS FROM THE NYE TESTIMONY. HIS OPENING PARAGRAPH READS: "HAVING FAILED TO BULLY INDIA INTO ACCEPTING FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS FOR ALL ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES, THE U.S. IS SEEKING TO SOFT-TALK NEW DELHI INTO ACCEPTING ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS. THE TECHNIQUE APPARENTLY IS TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION OF MR. MORARJI DESAI'S STAND ON VETICLE PROLIFERATION, TO ASSURE HIM THAT EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO HAMMER OUT A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY AND TO SUGGEST THAT INDIA IN THE MEANTIME SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE.Z

IN THE "EXPRESS", PARASURAM CONCLUDED THAT "THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION NOW REALIZES THAT PRESSURE TACTICS AND ATTEMPTS TO BULLY AND BROWBEAT INDIA HAVE BACK-FIRED" AND THAT THE USG WILL PRESSURE INDIA "IN A DIFFERENT FORM, THROUGH PERSUASION AND EVEN FLATTERY AND CAJOLERY."

9. ALL OF THE ACCOUNTS IN THE DELHI PAPERS MENTION AMBASSADOR GOHEEN'S LETTERS TO SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN ON THE TARAPUR ISSUE. THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" AND "TIMES OF INDIA" CARRY SEPARATE ARTICLES WHICH CONTAIN EXTENSIVE AND LENGTHY QUOTES FROM THE LETTERS AND ARE HEADLINED "GOHEEN OPPOSES 'SQUEEZE'" AND "INDIA WILL NOT KNUCKLE DOWN, SAYS GOHEEN." SEVERAL PAPERS REPORT THAT REP. OTTINGER DESCRIBED THE AMBASSADOR'S REASONING AS "FLAWED." ONE ACCOUNT, HOWEVER, MENTIONED THAT THE LETTERS ARE "HAVING AN IMPACT ON MEMBERS" OF THE COMMITTEE.

10. SCATTERED AMONG SEVERAL OF THE DISPATCHES ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CORRESPONDENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. SEVERAL WROTE THAT ADMINISTRATION AND STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES ARE "FAIRLY CERTAIN" THAT CONGRESS WOULD NOT BLOCK THE 7.6 TON SHIPMENT CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION. THERE WAS DIS-AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, ON PROSPECTS FOR SUBSEQUENT DELIVERIES. THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" CORRESPONDENT BELIEVED THAT "A FAVORABLE DECISION IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE WOULD MAKE THE PASSAGE OF SUBSEQUENT SHIPMENTS MUCH EASIER." PARASURAM IN THE "EXPRESS" REPORTED THAT NYE TOLD INDIAN PRESSMEN THAT ONCE THE CURRENT SHIPMENT WAS CLEARED, THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN FUTURE SHIPMENTS DURING THE "GRACE PERIOD" BECAUSE THE FIFTH MEMBER OF THE NRC WILL HAVE BEEN APPOINTED. WARREN UNNA IN THE "STATESMAN", HOWEVER, WROTE THAT "THERE IS MUCH SPECULATION THAT NEITHER THE NRC NOR THE PRESIDENT WILL APPROVE ANY FURTHER RE-FUELING SHIPMENTS UNTIL INDIA AGREES ON INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION OF ALL HER FACILITIES - DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE NEW U.S. LAW DOES NOT MAKE THIS MANDATORY UNTIL 1980".

11. SEVERAL REPORTS NOTED THAT THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WAS ABOUT TO HOLD SIMILAR HEARINGS ON THE TARAPUR SHIPMENT ON MAY 24, BUT THERE WAS NO COVERAGE OF THESE HEARINGS IN TODAY'S DELHI PRESS. GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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